

## FESTIVAL OF LIGHT CELEBRATES VICTORIES OF JUDAS MACCABEUS

The feast of the Maccabees, the Feast of the Dedication, the Festival of Lights—these are the three names by which Chanukah, the next Jewish holiday, is known.

This festival begins on Kislev 25—Saturday, Dec. 16—and continues for eight days. Chanukah was instituted by Judas Maccabeus, the priestly hero of the Syrian wars, his fighting brothers

of Jewish mountaineers defeated the Syrian legions and their allies of hundreds of thousands. Judas recaptured Jerusalem, purified the temple, erected a new altar and made new holy vessels.

The dedication ceremonies continued for eight days. The streets and homes were illuminated, giving the holiday the title of the Festival of Lights.

There is also a legend to the effect that after the battle which resulted in the capture of the temple a small cruse of unpolluted oil was discovered by the priests. This oil, being consecrated, was ignited and it lasted eight days, burning brightly until new oil could be prepared and consecrated.

For this reason in every orthodox Jewish home small tapers are lighted during the Chanukah period. One is lighted the first night, two the second and so on until the eighth night, when eight tapers are lighted.

Soon after the exile of Israel the rabbis ordained that it was not the intention of those who made the Chanukah law to illuminate the house, but the entrance or the windows, so that passers by might see them, and centuries ago these lights were placed before each door of the house and as many lights were kindled as there were persons in the house.

The holiday is a joyous one, the playing of games of all kinds being a characteristic feature. The talmud does not forbid it so long



The "Trendel," a home-made top which entertained Jewish boys centuries ago.

and the elders of the city of Jerusalem, 165 B. C.

Three years before Antiochus Epiphanus had erected a pagan altar in the temple at Jerusalem and worshipped the idol Zeus Olympius. The rebellion under Judas Maccabeus followed.

In a series of battles a handful